

Seattle City Council

Public Safety, Arts, & Civil Rights Committee Meeting

Thursday, 10AM, February 26, 2004

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Christopher J. Jarmick**

Today's Words' Worth poet is **Priscilla Long**

Priscilla Long is author of the history book, *Where the Sun Never Shines: a History of America's Bloody Coal Industry*, and of numerous essays, poems, fictions, and creative nonfictions published in literary journals such as *Ontario Review*, *The Southern Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Passages North*, *Under the Sun*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Fugue*, *First Intensity*, *Seattle Review*, and the *Women's Review of Books*. In the mid-1990s she workshopped and performed with the group of poets *The Seattle Plus One*. Her awards include the Seattle Arts Commission, the Los Angeles Arts Commission, and the Richard Hugo House Founder's Award. She holds an M.F. A. from the University of Washington, and teaches writing at UW Extension, at Field's End on Bainbridge Island, and elsewhere. She serves as Senior Editor of the online encyclopedia of Washington state history, www.historylink.org.

Yale Bridge (Lewis River Bridge)

by Priscilla Long

One of Washington's 3,154 bridges. Built in 1932 on the piers of the bridge flooded in the damming of the Lewis River.

Lewis River roils through Doug-fir
down to the Columbia.
A County road rides
the North Fork's north ledge--
cliffs of fall. "O the mind,
mind has mountains..." The road
veers to bridge earth's gash,
to leap the sheer, to run
Yale to Yacolt. Steel rope
suspends the span, spurns

the mind's abyss. Trestle
and truss recant the older bridge.
Backstays anchor to basalt.
The live load is logtruck
RV, black bear, mule deer.
The dead load--a timber deck.
Hawks nest high in steel
tower trees. The bridge
defies earth, defines sky,
rock, river bluff, black waters
whispering to infinity.

-- *END* --